



# SAFETY NEWS

Mike Huckabee, Governor

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James L. Salkeld, Director



## TEEN WORKERS NEED OUR HELP

**E**ighty percent of U.S. teenagers work during their high school years. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, 45,000 teens were injured at work in 2001, and 175 died as a result of an on the job injury.

James L. Salkeld, Director of the Arkansas Department of Labor (ADOL) said, "Everyone wants young workers to have a positive and safe work place. Our child labor laws help insure the health and safety of teen workers, and we want all teens, their parents and employers to be aware of these laws."

On the national level, numerous federal agencies, collectively known as the Federal Network for Young Worker Safety and Health (FedNet) have joined together to educate teens, their parents, counselors and employers on how young people can stay safe on the job. Their web-based product, Teen Summer Jobs: Safety Pays is available at [www.osha.gov/SLTC/youth/summjobs/index.html](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/youth/summjobs/index.html) in both English and Spanish.

On the local level, as we reported to you several months ago, the Arkansas Department of Labor, the federal OSHA Area Office, various associations, and other groups entered into a safety alliance that is focusing on safety training for employers and teens in grades 9-12 who work in fast food establishments and grocery stores. Various other training material on Teen Safety in general, including a promotional film, are available free of charge from ADOL. Contact Juanita Matlock at 501-682-9090 for more information.

The Labor Standards Division of the Arkansas Department of Labor has also been busy educating the public on child labor issues through on-site visits and public service announcements.

Under state and federal child labor laws, teens are limited in the industries in which they may work and the types of equipment they may use. For instance, 14 and 15 year olds are prohibited from working in construction, manufacturing, and warehousing. They also may not use power driven grinders, choppers, cutters, or mixers; and they may not cook. Federal law prohibits 16 and 17 year olds from some types of jobs. All teens under the age of 18 have limits on the number of hours they may work both when school is in session and when school is not.

For more detailed information regarding child labor, call 501-682-4500 and ask for one of our two free publications: *Arkansas Child Labor Laws and Administrative Regulations*, or *A Guide to Child Labor Laws in Arkansas*.



*Bonita Stocks, Labor Safety Consultant Supervisor with the Arkansas Department of Labor presents award to Acme Brick Plant Manager Joe Spence.*

## ACME BRICK EARNS 10 YEAR SAFETY AWARD

**A**cme Brick Company in Malvern was recently the recipient of an Accumulative Years Safety Award. The company's 44 employees accumulated ten years without a lost day away from work due to a work related injury or illness. The Ouachita Plant employees have had a safety program and a safety committee made up of both management and employees for over 20 years.

The Accumulative Years Service Award is designed for small employers that work years without a lost day away from work, but are unable to reach any of the Million Work Hour Awards. For information on how your organization can qualify to receive a safety award, contact Ann Sanders at 501-682-4329 or e-mail [ann.sanders@arkansas.gov](mailto:ann.sanders@arkansas.gov)

## FEDERAL OSHA ISSUES CITATIONS TO TWO ARKANSAS COMPANIES

A Fort Smith construction company allegedly failed to protect employees from trenching and other job-related hazards resulting in citations and proposed penalties totaling \$111,000 for serious and repeated violations of safety standards from the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

OSHA cited the company, which installs water, sewer and utility lines, following an inspection by Federal OSHA's Little Rock district office that began October 15 as part of a national emphasis program aimed at preventing trenching and excavation accidents. The Missouri-based company employs 450 workers nationwide, 13 of which were working in Fort Smith.

Four alleged serious violations included failing to provide fire extinguishers within 75-feet of a fuel dispensing unit; failing to ensure that hazardous equipment was properly guarded; failing to ensure bi-directional machines had an operable horn and failing to provide portable ladders which extended at least three feet above the landing surface. A serious violation is one in which there is a substantial probability that death or serious physical harm could result from a hazard about which the employer knew or should have known.

Four repeat violations included failing to provide warning vests for employees exposed to vehicular traffic, failing to provide protective equipment against falling materials and equipment and failing to provide adequate protection for employees in the event of a cave-in. A repeat citation is issued when OSHA has cited the employer during the past three years for substantially similar infractions of the law.

At the opposite end of the state, Federal OSHA issued citations to a poultry processing plant in Texarkana for alleged willful and serious violations of health and safety standards following the October 2003 death of an employee who was asphyxiated when he inhaled hydrogen sulfide. OSHA has proposed penalties of \$436,000 for the alleged violations.

The inspection began October 10, 2003 after an employee who was repairing leaks on a hydrolyser was asphyxiated after inhaling hydrogen sulfide. A hydrolyser processes chicken feathers to make an additive for high-end pet foods. Hydrogen sulfide is a poisonous gas created by decaying organic matter.

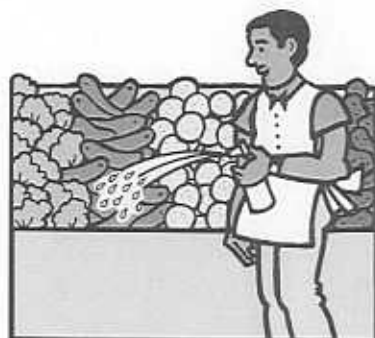
The alleged willful violations were for failing to protect employees from exposure to excessive amounts of hydrogen sulfide; failing to develop, maintain and implement a proper written hazard communication program; failing to properly identify hazardous chemicals and failing to properly train employees in the detection and hazards of exposure to hydrogen sulfide. Willful violations are those committed with an intentional disregard of, or plain indifference to, the Occupational Safety and Health Act and regulations.

The alleged serious violations include failure to: identify and evaluate respiratory hazards in the workplace; ensure proper breathing apparatus were worn by employees engaged in emergency response activities; develop and implement a proper emergency response plan; properly test employees required to wear a respirator; ensure that respirators were available; and ensure that persons trained to render first aid were available to render aid.

The other violations were for failing to properly maintain the OSHA Form 300 Log of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses and failing to properly maintain the OSHA 301 form or equivalent for each work-related injury or illness.

Both companies had 15 working days from receipt of

citations to comply, request an informal conference with the OSHA Little Rock area director, or contest the citations and proposed penalties before the independent Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.

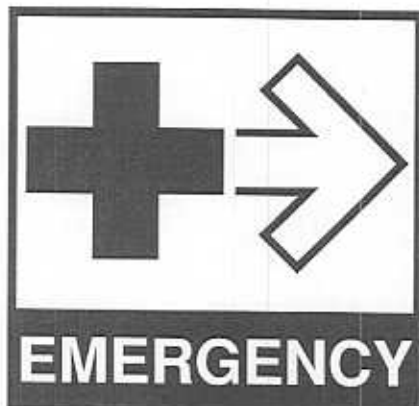


## ERGONOMICS GUIDELINES ANNOUNCED FOR GROCERY STORES

The U.S. Department of Labor OSHA recently announced the release of industry-specific guidelines for the prevention of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) in grocery stores. The guidelines provide practical recommendations to help grocery store employers and employees reduce the number and severity of injuries in their workplaces.

The guidelines emphasize various solutions that have been implemented by stores across the country and have been effective in reducing work-related injuries and illnesses. An "Implementing Solutions" section offers examples of ergonomic solutions that may be used to control exposure to ergonomic risk factors in grocery stores. The section includes corrective actions, including checkout, shelf stocking, bakery, produce and meat departments.

For more information on OSHA's Guidelines for Retail Grocery Stores, visit their website at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)



## THE URGENCY OF EMERGENCY PLANS ADVISED

**N**o one plans ON an emergency, but we should all plan FOR them. Employers should establish safety and health management systems and prepare their workers to handle disasters before they arise.

Where required by some OSHA standards, firms with more than ten employees must have a written emergency action plan; smaller companies may communicate their plans orally. Top management support and the commitment and involvement of all employees are essential to an effective emergency action plan.

Employers should review plans with employees when initially put in place and re-evaluate and amend the plan periodically whenever the plan itself, or employee responsibilities change. Emergency procedures, including the handling of any toxic chemicals, should include:

- Escape procedures and escape route assignments.
- Special procedures for employees who perform or shut down critical plant operations.
- Systems to account for all employees after evacuation and for information about the plan.
- Rescue and medical duties for employees who perform them.
- Means for reporting fires and other emergencies.

## HOT WEATHER WORK TIPS

By Mike Watson, AOSH Supervisor

**S**ummer time is here in Arkansas and the thermometer is proof. Rising temperatures and increased outdoor activity can cause heat related illnesses.

High temperatures and humidity stress the body's ability to cool itself. **Heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke** can cause severe illness or even death, and should be of special concern during the summer months.

### Heat Cramps

Heat cramps are muscle spasms that primarily affect the arms, legs and stomach. Heat cramps are caused by heavy sweating, especially when water is replaced but without salt or potassium. Many times they occur later, after the activity, and can be very painful. To avoid heat cramps, drink electrolyte solutions like PowerAde or Gatorade during peak sweating times and eat foods high in potassium, like bananas.

### Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is much more serious. It occurs when the body's cooling system is overworked and you don't drink enough fluids to replace what you are sweating out. The symptoms include dizziness,

headache, nausea, extreme thirst and fatigue with loss of coordination. Sometimes the pulse increases (120-200) but is weak. Tingling in the hands and feet is also common.

If you or someone you are with experiences any of these symptoms, they should be moved to a cool location and lie down with the feet slightly elevated. Preferably into an air-conditioned building or vehicle. Try to cool them with wet towels and fan them. Have them drink as much as they can and avoid any strenuous activity for at least a day. If the symptoms continue seek medical attention.

### Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is a life threatening illness. It occurs when the body temperature rises to dangerous levels and the body has lost its supply of water and salt. Heat cramps and heat exhaustion are the precursors to heat stroke. Heat stroke is often mistaken for heart attack on an outdoor jobsite. Symptoms include a high body temperature of 103 degrees or more and hot, red or flushed dry skin. They usually have difficulty breathing and constricted pupils. Nausea, vomiting and confusion are also common. Immediately move the victim to a cool area and cool the body as fast as possible by pouring water on them, cold packs, and fanning. Call 911 and get medical help ASAP! Prevention

### SAFETY NEWS

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Is the Key -

-Drink lots of liquids avoiding alcohol and caffeine

-Wear light clothing

-Take frequent breaks in a cool place

-Use fans when possible

With a little common sense, you can avoid heat related illnesses.



## SICK BUILDING SYNDROME

By Mike Watson, AOSH Supervisor

**S**ick Building Syndrome (SBS) is a term used to describe situations in which building occupants experience acute health problems and/or discomfort that appears to be linked to time spent in a "sick" building. Often this is a temporary condition. In the summer months when the heat index is high, air conditioners

suffer to maintain a comfortable atmosphere. From time to time the air is down and the complaints roll in. Many times it is because there is simply no fresh air or ventilation. Many buildings have windows that do not open. This reduces the oxygen level in a building where the air conditioner is on the blink.

Indicators of SBS usually include occupants complaining of headaches, eye, nose and throat irritation, light-headedness, dry cough, nausea, fatigue, difficulty concentrating and sensitivity to odors. Occupants also report that they feel better when they are not in the building or that their symptoms clear up over the weekend and then return when they return to work.

In a recent case investigated by the Department of Labor's Arkansas Occupational Safety and Health Division (AOSH), the air conditioner had to be replaced in a 4-story office building in which the windows did not open. Many of the occupants complained of the symptoms described above. The

process of replacing the cooling unit took several days and heat was a major problem. Nausea and lightheadedness were the chief complaints as well as the heat.

After investigation, it was discovered that the employees had shut the fresh air vents because "they were blowing hot air". If they had left them open, they would have had fresh air and avoided SBS. The management had taken excellent measures to minimize the discomfort but failed to monitor the vents. After opening the vents, the oxygen level returned to normal within an hour.

There is no law requiring air conditioning. People work outside in all types of temperatures and conditions. But ventilation is required. There was no violation issued in the building above. Indoor air quality is naturally a concern for all who work in buildings where the windows do not open. If you have a concern or would like more information, contact the Arkansas Dept of Labor's AOSH Division at 501-682-9091.